

## **2005 State of the City Address**

***Dan Klein, Mayor***

Crown Point, Indiana

February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005

I would like to take this opportunity to look back on the accomplishments of my administration since the day that I was hired as the Mayor of this great city. I'd like to review the promised initiatives and how we kept our promise to make this great city even better during our first 365 days.

Additionally, we have great opportunities positioned just ahead of us and tonight, I want to share my vision of our future with you.

### **“The State of City is once again . . . on the Right Path”**

From the very beginning, I have promised you that I would operate the City - more like a business. One of my first accomplishments was to see that the city passed a comprehensive ethics resolution. The City of Crown Point Ethics resolution ensures that decisions are made with integrity, treating everyone fairly. There is no double standard in Crown Point. I expect each leader of our administration to work just as hard and to behave just as ethically as any other employee of the city.

We have moved to an administrative model that includes hiring the best people for the job. Starting with a new human resources director, Paula Carey, we have begun to quantify the knowledge, skills, and abilities of all new employees. We now look for the most qualified candidates for each position who will work hard and “work smart” to make life better for every Crown Point citizen. Paula Carey has already helped the city realize a savings of over \$540,000 in healthcare claims during this last year.

With the enthusiasm and assistance of City Councilman, Andrew Kyres, we were able to recruit our Parks Department Director, Julie Johnson whose innovative ideas include new programs and a new parks newsletter. This has increased participation opportunities for many of our citizens.

The City is about results. I promised the citizens of Crown Point that I would be committed to more efficient use of the taxpayer's dollars through business practices that make sense. I feel that it is important to treat our citizens not only as customers, but also stockholders; each with a large financial investment in the city. I am here to protect our investment.

One of my accomplishments included a through reorganization of the Public Works Department realizing a savings of over \$152,000. Under the able leadership of Jay Olson, we have improved service to the city without adding additional employees.

We have established an aggressive new fleet management process utilizing a centralized purchasing system. This will efficiently rotate our inventory of vehicles, lowering maintenance costs and improving safety.

I take pride in our efforts to streamline the administration of the city. Just look at what our Clerk-Treasurer, Patti Olson, has done to improve the payroll system for the city - saving \$25,000 in payroll administration costs by bringing payroll processing back in-house.

We are seeing the results of redevelopment. We see the improvements in the city in projects such as the renewal on North Main Street at the Summit Street intersection. During the next few months, we will begin to see the transformation of Main and Summit Streets, bringing vitality and more opportunities for everyone.

We have spent countless hours working on negotiations, and solutions to the Old High School site. Some of the Council people, giving much of their time and talent include Council members Bremmer, Condron, Corbin, and Drasga. We also thank others such as Rob Gardiner of the Redevelopment Commission and Joe Beckman, business community leader, for their selfless contribution to this project. We anticipate good things happening on the Old High School site.

We look forward to new business opportunities just on the horizon, with the anticipated hiring of our new Economic Development Director. We need to improve the chances of economic growth in our city. Councilman Conquest and Redevelopment Commission member Ted Rosdil have been helpful in the selection process.

Our city has seen tremendous growth during the past year with the number of new single family housing permits, up again this year to 280 over last year's 261 permits: This in an increase in construction value of over \$30 million dollars to \$107 million for 2004.

I am constantly amazed by the many opportunities for cost savings. We have reduced costs by carefully analyzing asset inventories and eliminating unnecessary insurance coverage. This administration has and continues to seek out federal, state and other grant dollars to help finance the infrastructure of our city. Our Public Works department has successfully obtained State grant money for the purchase of additional recycling equipment this year. Our Fire/Rescue department has also been able to use grant money to purchase needed rescue equipment.

The growth of Crown Point is inevitable when you have the warmth of our people and the support of the community. The burden that has hung over Liberty Park residents for years must be lifted. We are moving the plan forward to include, rather than exclude this important neighborhood. As our borders expand from year to year, more and more people will be able to take advantage of the benefits of our city's charm, character and culture.

**“Accomplishment is good, but our vision is even more exciting.”**

My administration is in the process of establishing a five year Strategic Plan that is innovative, aggressive and yet respectful, of the traditions of Crown Point. First, as we begin another year as one of the safest communities in Indiana, we are planning to add two more police officers. Your safety and security are our first priorities.

We are prepared to raise the standards and the performance of our City's government. We are completing the process to update and revise our city's master plan . . . a blueprint for intelligently managed development. It will set the tone for our future. We will take into account the opportunities and the way of life that make this community great - and try to make it even greater. We thank Councilman Farley for his early support of revising the master plan. By taking control of the city's development, we can attract the right kinds of corporations. We can foster economic partnerships, and we can temper our decisions while still preserving the composition and character of the city.

I will take a personal interest in the return of the Courthouse Square to its past glory. The Old Court House Square, the focal point of our community will benefit from our Façade Grant Program. The Façade Grant Program will reimburse costs for renovations to a building's façade and signage.

Looking forward, we are planning to bring the city into a technological leadership position with wireless internet connections all around the square. Technology gains in city services will continue to be on the front burner. We plan to install wireless water meter reading equipment which will save tax dollars. Builders and developers will applaud our initiative to computerize the locations of every underground cable, pipe and structure.

Redevelopment possibilities are now on the table for discussion. The removal of old, inappropriate and underused buildings will return valuable land resources to more community friendly uses. My East Street Proposal will allow for revitalization and improve the appearance of our community.

I am changing the way we look at our streets and sidewalks. We are taking inventory of the composition, condition and the safety for use in walking, running and biking. My goal is to identify isolated areas and connect them with sidewalks to become part of our community.

We will move forward with our promise to extend the Bike Path to Crown Point. In the next several months, we will publish a time-line for the completion of the Bike Trail Path. We are “building bridges” to our neighboring communities north of the city, and connecting them to our downtown square. Nothing will unite people and communities better. This healthy initiative will attract renewed interest in our city with an inherently positive appeal and wide spread support.

We are moving ahead to make Crown Point whole again; the combination of neighborhoods that will propel this city to even higher levels of greatness. I promised to manage the economic growth of the city, positioning Crown Point by making the tough decisions; not the politically convenient decisions but the right decisions. From border to border, we need to be one people; one purpose for the future of our children and their children.

This past year was exciting, intense, and a challenging learning experience. We worked hard to find common ground on which to build a new beginning. We have worked hard to assemble a positive vision for our future. Everything we do holds the promise of renewal and opportunity. It has been a wonderful adventure so far and I am just as thrilled as the first day I stepped into this building.

*Thank you.*